

SESSION 2: HOW DOES GOD HEAL?

Learning Objectives

- 1 To explore questions and issues raised by healing ministry and its relationship to secular medicine**
- 2 To lay theological foundations for a broad understanding of health, healing, wholeness and suffering.**
- 3 To consider what are the expectations around healing and what are possible blockages to healing.**

What the facilitator needs

Essential for each group member :

Handout 2 : 2 Corinthians 12 vv 1-10 ; Mark 9 vv 14-29

Handout 3 : Group Exercise –Blockages to healing

Also : you may want to have a music copy of Singing the Faith available for “Just as I am”, if it is to be sung as part of the worship.

Powerpoints

There are powerpoints for each of the six sessions. Some of the slides have notes for the facilitator beneath the slide.

Start-time/Slides	Activity	Facilitator's Notes
0.00 Slide: Course Title Welcome Slide and Session Title. Slide to re-cap on Session 1.	1. Welcome group and ask for any questions or reflections on Session 1.	Remind the group of the reflective log as a place to record questions or reflections.
0.05 Slide to introduce theme of Session 2.	Theme of the session: questions and issues around healing ministry, and exploring the relationship between healing ministry and secular medicine.	Encourage diversity of views and the expression of reservations, concerns, fears about healing ministry. These should be recorded, perhaps on a flip-chart, to be referred to later. Invite from the group questions and issues they have.
0.10 Slide to introduce video. DVD interview	2. Video: interview with Dr. Richard Vautrey, GP and Deputy Chair of BMA GP Committee and past Vice-President of the Methodist Conference and Methodist local preacher. Comments from group.	Purpose of the video: 1. To demonstrate the factors that can prevent healing from taking place. 2. To express views of a high profile GP and Methodist on healing ministry. Guided question : Dr. Vautrey talks about the journey of healing and wholeness. What can Christians contribute to others on that journey?
0.25 Slide for worship	4. Worship: read the passage from Mark 9:38-45 Prayer.	Passage highlights how Jesus was not against those who healed but were not 'one of us.' The passage argues against too narrow a view of what are valid ways in which God heals. Include a prayer along these lines either by you or a member of the group.

Start-time/Slides	Activity	Facilitator's Notes
<p>0.30 Slide : healing ministry and secular medicine</p> <p>Slide : when a cure doesn't come</p>	<p>Group invited to give examples where they feel prayer has complemented secular medicine or has worked independently of it.</p>	<p>Encourage group to consider a both/and approach to prayer/healing and secular medicine. The latter often confirms God's healing on people's lives. Patients often recover more speedily and with better outcomes from surgery or other forms of treatment when they have been prayed for.</p> <p>Although there has been an extensive survey into this whole area of the effects of prayer on healing and recovery, the evidence, while pointing to the possibility of some correlation, remains anecdotal rather than scientific.</p> <p>Theological basis: God does not distinguish between sacred and secular; revealed in an incarnate God in Jesus, God's involved in the world God created and is not distanced from it.</p>
<p>0.50 Slide : How has this been a blockage to faith?</p> <p>Introducing the issue of personal suffering which challenges our faith in God and confidence in healing ministry.</p> <p>Slide: text of 2 Corinthians 12: 1-10</p>	<p>The group shares in 2s or 3s examples of personal suffering experienced by themselves or others. The group is encouraged to consider from the Bible passage (Handout 2) why God did not take away Paul's 'thorn in the flesh'.</p> <p>Invite reflection on how Paul's experience relates to your own.</p>	<p>It is important to allow participants to express views on this issue, even though some feelings may run deep. Sensitivity and space to share are necessary to this exercise. You may need to allow more time than is allocated and agree with the group to extend the finishing time.</p> <p>It may be necessary to emphasise that God does not send sickness and infirmity for a given purpose but sometimes they can allow for key experiences that enable us to grow and develop as human beings. However, on occasions, a more negative outcome may occur. Invite reflection on how we respond if we find no purpose in the way prayers are answered .</p> <p>For further reading: Book of Job</p>

<p>1.10 Slide: Video testimony (Jo and Abigail's story—Part 1)</p>	<p>Video: Testimony of Revd. Jo Archer-Siddall and Abigail Archer-Manthorpe</p> <p>Group response</p>	<p>Children are often more spiritually open to healing by God than adults.</p> <p>Guided question : What do you see as the outcomes resulting from a friend's invitation to Jo to attend a healing service?</p>
<p>1.20 Slide : " Healing of the lunatic boy" (Methodist Art Collection)</p> <p>Slide: Introducing Bible passage Mark 9:14-29</p>	<p>Bible passage (Handout 2) : Mark 9 vv 14-29</p> <p>Group divided into 3 buzz groups, one group taking perspective of each of the characters in the Bible story: 1. Disciples, 2. Boy's father, 3. Boy. Imagine you are that person or one of the disciples and share how this incident is experienced by you. Get in touch with thoughts and feelings your character might have had.</p> <p>Read the passage Mark 9:14-29.</p> <p>Drawing on the passage and your own experience, discuss the reactions of those involved in the story with regard to what might have prevented the boy from receiving healing before Jesus arrived.</p> <p>Can there be blockages to healing? If so, what might these be?</p>	<p>Discussion may centre around the role of faith in healing. Disciples may lack faith or confidence in themselves but this in turn may suggest they are not trusting God sufficiently. The boy's father recognises in himself a mixture of faith and doubt or unbelief. He may well speak for many people. We are not told of the boy's feelings, as the boy is 'unable to speak' (v.17). The group reflecting on the story from the boy's perspective may well need to use their imagination more than the other two groups.</p> <p>One issue that may well arise is that people are sometimes blamed for lack of faith when they are not healed. Faith, like positive thinking, is helpful in the process of healing, but the experience of the boy's father shows that complete faith is not a prerequisite for healing. However: see below.</p>

<p>1.40 Slide: Blockages to healing.</p> <p>Group exercise</p>	<p>Whole group divided into 3 small groups. Each small group asked to take a Bible story given on Handout 3 to explore potential blockages to healing and what we can learn about faith and healing from it.</p>	<p>Several other gospel accounts include Jesus' commending the sick for their faith in bringing about their healing. Jesus may well have expected in his disciples the same kind of faith he witnessed in the woman with haemorrhages (Mark 5:25-34) or the Roman Centurion (Matthew 8:5-13), or the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:24-30).</p> <p>An important factor, therefore, in exercising a healing ministry is the belief that God can heal through us and in spite of us, if we rely on God rather than ourselves. Although those exercising healing ministry may have some blockages to healing in themselves, such as anxiety, lack of confidence or unconfessed sin, God is still able to use them, just as the disciples of Jesus went on to heal others as Jesus did. Those engaged in healing ministry can become more effective as their spiritual life develops and their relationship with God grows.</p>
<p>1.55 Slide: Worship and reflection</p> <p>Slide : "Healing of the lunatic boy" (Methodist Art Collection)</p> <p>Slides : words of "Just as I am"</p> <p>Slide : Prayer</p>	<p>Time for Reflection: group members pray with and for each other in 2s or 3s</p> <p>Words of the hymn may be said or sung as a closing prayer.</p>	<p>This final activity may be open-ended if the hymn is said or sung first, followed by the time of praying with one another. The prayer that group members offer for each other need be only a brief sentence. It can be a simple prayer of blessing, if there is nothing specific requiring prayer.</p>